

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. ASAD FACES ANOTHER STIFF TEST OVER LEBANON POLICY

IN THE VIEW OF EMBASSY DAMASCUS, ASAD FACES MOUNTING PRES-
SURE AS HE SEEKS TO ASSURE THE SUCCESSFUL TRANSFER OF
POWER FROM FRANGIE TO SARKIS SEPTEMBER 23. BOTH HIS
ACKNOWLEDGED OPPONENTS AND HIS PROFESSED FRIENDS ARE IN A
POSITION TO EXPLOIT HIS WEAKNESSES:

--ASAD WOULD BE SEVERELY EMBARRASSED BY ANY MARONITE
MOVE TOWARD DE JURE OR EVEN INCREASED DE FACTO
PARTITION OF LEBANON.

--MILITARY AND POLITICAL TIES BETWEEN EGYPT, IRAQ,
LIBYA AND THE USSR AND THEIR LEBANESE CLIENTS

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CONSTITUTE A FURTHER CONSTRAINT ON SYRIA'S CAPABILITY

TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVES.

--THOUGH UNLIKELY AT THE PRESENT, ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF SOUTHERN LEBANON MIGHT CAUSE GRAVE REPERCUSSIONS AGAINST DAMASCUS. DAMASCUS 5535, 8/20 (SECRET).

2. FRANCE: CHIRAC TO BE SHUFFLED OUT OF CABINET?

PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC'S AUGUST 19 LUNCHEON WITH GISCARD FURTHER FUELED SPECULATION THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL RESIGN. OBSERVERS INCREASINGLY QUESTION THE ABILITY OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE GAULLIST UDR--SYMBOLIZED BY CHIRAC--TO WORK TOGETHER TOWARD THE SOLUTION OF PRESSING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. EMBASSY PARIS COMMENTS THAT CHIRAC'S CONTINUED TENURE DEPENDS ON WHETHER:

--GISCARD GIVES THE PRIME MINISTER THE POWER AND SUPPORT THAT CHIRAC FEELS HE NEEDS TO RUN THE GOVERNMENT; AND

--THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY GISCARD WILL UNVEIL SEPTEMBER 20 IN HIS CHARTER FOR A LIBERAL SOCIETY IS COMPATIBLE WITH CHIRAC'S.

THE EMBASSY ADDS THAT PRAGMATISM ON THE PART OF BOTH MEN WOULD ARGUE FOR THEIR REACHING A COMPROMISE THAT WOULD ALLOW CHIRAC TO CONTINUE IN OFFICE. (CONFIDENTIAL) PARIS 24290, 8/20.

3. KENYA: FOES AND FRIENDS AFTER ENTEBBE

DEFENSE MINISTRY PERMANENT SECRETARY KIEREINI TOLD DCM LINDSTROM AUGUST 20 THAT KENYA BELIEVES UGANDA MAY BE PLANNING, WITH PALESTINIAN AID, A COMMANDO RAID TO DESTROY CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT AT NAIROBI AIRPORT. KIEREINI ADDED:

--THE INTELLIGENCE CAME FROM SOURCES IN UGANDA AND FITS WITH THE KNOWN PRESENCE IN KENYA OF UGANDAN AND PALESTINIAN AGENTS.

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--THE RAID IS EXPECTED TO UTILIZE A LIBYAN BOEING 707 AND MAY USE AVIATION FUEL RECENTLY RECEIVED FROM TANZANIA.

--A SEPARATE ATTACK ON THE MOMBASA OIL REFINERY IS ALSO BEING PLANNED.

EMBASSY COMMENT: WHILE WE HAVE NO INDEPENDENT CORROBORATION OF KIEREINI'S REPORT, AMIN'S THREAT TO "PAY BACK" ISRAEL FOR ENTEBBE LENDS PLAUSIBILITY TO IT.
(SECRET) NAIROBI 8846, 8/20.

4. MEXICO: ECHEVERRIA PUBLICLY STRIDENT, PRIVATELY CONCERNED

AMBASSADOR JOVA REPORTS THAT, IN CONTRAST TO ECHEVERRIA'S STRIDENT PUBLIC REMARKS, THE PRESIDENT IS PRIVATELY CONCERNED THAT THE MACDONALD LETTER PORTENDS A DETERIORATION IN US-MEXICAN RELATIONS AND THAT HIS ANTI-US RHETORIC HAS GONE TOO FAR. ACCORDING TO ECHEVERRIA'S PRIVATE EMISSARY ZAPATA LOREDO, THE PRESIDENT:

--WANTS ZAPATA LOREDO TO VISIT THE US TO TAKE SOUNDINGS AMONG THE MEDIA AND TO SEE CONGRESSMAN MACDONALD; AND

--SUSPECTS THAT RIGHTIST MEXICAN OR TRANSNATIONAL INTERESTS ARE BEHIND THE LETTER.

AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT: NORMALLY THE INDIFFERENCE OF THE US PRESS AND PUBLIC TO EVENTS IN MEXICO ENABLES MEXICAN LEADERS TO KEEP SEPARATE THEIR DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN AUDIENCES, BUT ECHEVERRIA'S PRESENT HIGH INTERNATIONAL PROFILE HAS FUSED HIS TWO AUDIENCES TO THE DETRIMENT OF A HERETOFORE USEFUL TACTIC. WHILE WE SHOULD BE DISCREETLY HELPFUL. IT DOES NOT BEHOOVE US TO BE OVERLY ACCOMMODATING BY SPRINGING TO ECHEVERRIA'S DEFENSE.
(CONFIDENTIAL) MEXICO 10707, 8/20 (LIMDIS).

5. PERU: SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT SOVIET AIRCRAFT
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AN ADVISER TO PRIME MINISTER ARBULU TOLD EMBASSY LIMA THAT THE GOP MAY TAKE A "STEP BACK" ON THE PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF SOVIET AIRCRAFT OUT OF CONCERN FOR THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH A PURCHASE. THE SOURCE ALSO NOTED THAT AIR MINISTER POGGI CONTINUES TO PRESS FOR THE DEAL, WHICH HE REGARDS AS ESSENTIAL TO THE MODERNIZATION OF THE AIR FORCE, AND MAY RESIGN IF IT FALLS THROUGH. (CONFIDENTIAL) LIMA 7552, 8/20. KISSINGER

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